

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 CU-05 NIC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 SY-04

OPR-02 SIL-01 LAB-06 EB-11 COME-00 A-01 M-02 SCCT-02

OC-06 CCO-00 DRC-01 /173 W
----- 088285

R 201120Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6929

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

13TH AIR FORCE/IN CLARK AB PI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15190

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: STUDENTS ATTACK CONSTITUTION II

REF: A. FBIS D202058Z SEP 74 B. BANGKOK 15107

1. STUDENT ACTIVISITS HAVE NOT YET BEEN COWERED BY THE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DECISION TO REJECT
STUDENT DEMANDS FOR REVISIONS IN THE CONSTITUTION
THAT WOULD: A) LOWER THE VOTING AGE FROM 20 TO 18;
B) LOWER THE MINIMUM AGE FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM
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25 TO 23; C) ELIMIINATE THE UPPER HOUSE; AND D) GIVE

THE PARLIAMENT POWER TO PASS ON BASING OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN THAILAND OR SENDING THAI TROOPS ABROAD (REF A). STUDENTS CONTINUE AT THIS TIME TO DELIVER HYDE PARK STYLE SPEECHES AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT ATTACKING THE NLA AS UNDEMOCRATIC AND UNWORTHY OF SUPPORT. M.R. KHUKRIT PRAMOT IS A TARGET OF THEIR ATTACKS EVEN THOUGH HE HAS SAID HE WILL INTRODUCE AN AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE VOTING AGE IF HE IS ELECTED TO THE NEXT PARLIAMENT. HE HAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE STUDENTS COULD ASK THE KING TO VETO THE CONSTITUTION AND SEND IT BACK FOR REVISION. (COMMENT: OAWS ALTERNATIVE SEEMS PARTICULARLY UNPALATABLE BECAUSE IT WILL DRAG THE KING INTO POLITICS AND COULD DELAY PROMULGATION OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR SOME TIME.)

2. THE NSCT HAS REPORTEDLY DECIDED TO "FIGHT" FOR THE FOUR DEMANDS. IT CALLED FOR STUDENTS TO MASS AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT BEGINNING AT 1200 HOURS TODAY. CROWDS AS OF 1600 HOURS ARE ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN 2-4,000 AND GROWING. TRAFFIC CONTINUES TO MOVE THROUGH THE AREA. CALLS HAVE GONE OUT FOR LABORERS TO JOIN IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH WE EXPECT TO CONTINUE THRU THE WEEKEND. CROWDS HAVE BEEN PEACEFUL SO FAR, BUT FOUR STUDENTS WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED IN AN UNRELATED CLASH BETWEEN TWO RIVAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION TO SPEECHES FOR THE FOUR SPECIFIC DEMANDS IN PARA 1 ABOVE, THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SOME SPEECHES AGAINST THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND. AMCONSUL UDORN REPORTS THAT 2-3,000 STUDENTS IN KORAT ARE MARCHING WITH THE SAME LIST OF DEMANDS TO THE LADY MO SQUARE IN CENTRAL KORAT CITY.

3. COMMENT: THE SITUATION COULD BEGIN TO DETERIORATE THOUGH IT IS NOW UNDER CONTROL. THE STUDENTS, IN THEIR OPINION, HAVE A CAUSE, PARTICULARLY IN THE VOTING AGE ISSUE, AROUND WHICH THEY CAN RALLY. HAD THEY RAISED THESE ISSUES ONE MONTH AGO, THE CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. THE VOTING AGE WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE BEEN LOWERED TO 18 AND THE CANDIDACY AGE TO 23. AS IT STANDS NOW A CONFRONTATION IS DEVELOPING THAT BODES ILL FOR ALL CONCERNED. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BACK DOWN GRACEFULLY ONCE AGAIN. IN FACT, PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK, ACCORDING TO THE BANGKOK "WORLD" OF 20 SEPTEMBER 1974, HAS

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SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENTS AND WILL NOT DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY AS THIS WOULD MEAN "STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN". MUCH DEPENDS ON WHETHER THE STUDENTS WILL DECIDE TO DO MORE THAN JUST GIVE SPEECHES. THIS TIME IF THEY PERPETRATE VIOLENCE, OR IT OCCURS BY ACCIDENT, WE EXPECT THE THAI POLICE TO CRACK DOWN HARD.
KINTNER

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NNN

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